Changes in cultivation trend due to price-rise

427. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian farmers are switching over to cultivation of sugarcane and pulses in the current Kharif season in preference to oliseeds like soyabean, rape and mustard seeds to the extent of around 26 million hectares;

(b) whether this trend is likely to continue in winter 2006 where areas reserved for rape and mustard seeds will give way to Chana and wheat; and

(c) whether this is due to the marginal rise in prices of edible oils and excessive rise in prices of sugar and pulses in the domestic markets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) The sowing operations for the current Kharif season crops are in progress. As per the reports received in the weekly Crop Weather Watch Group meeting held on 24th July 2006 in the Ministry of Agricultrue, the kharif area coverage under sugarcane, pulses and soyabean are shown in the table below:

Crop	Area Coverage (Lakh Hectares)	
	2006-07	2005-06 (corresponding period)
Sugarcane	44.45	42.80
Pulses	59.66	57.15
Soyabean	67.24	63.14

The above increase in area coverage during 2006-07 is more for soyabean compared to sugarcane and pulses. Rapseed & mustard is sown during the rabi season.

(b) Farmers are free to take decisions on crops substitution. It is too early to say anything about the likely area coverage for the crops to be sown in winter 2006.

(c) Does not arise.

Climate Risk Management

428. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a project called "Development of Extended Range Forecast for Climate Risk Management in Agriculture" has been initiated by Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to get wheather related information reach quickly to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. A project called Development and Application of Extended Range Forecast System (ERFS) for Climate Risk management in Agriculture has been initiated by Ministry of Agriculture. The major objective in this project is to develop a forecast system to provide seasonal scale prediction of precipitation and surface air temperature during the monsoon season as well as other rseasons over meteorological subdivisions/agro-climatic zones in India for use in agricultural applications and by other end-users. It envisages monthly scale forecast for 1-2 repersentative months in experimental mode. Project activities for R&D phase and validation of the application/operationalisation in envisaged to take about six years time. Leading national organizations/institutes like India Meteorological Department, National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF). Space Application Centre (Ahmedabad), Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi are associated. The projects is being coordinated by IIT, Delhi through a Scientific and Technical Committee. The project is funded by Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture. The project would disseminate generated forecast information in collaboration with NCMRWF through the involvement of Krishi Vigyan Kendras, State Agencies, ICAR institutes, etc.